

The President's Daily Brief

14 April 1971

46

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THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

The situation in East Pakistan is discussed on *Page 1*.

The Russians, apparently in an effort to defuse the Pakistani crisis, have been making private démarches to both the Pakistanis and the Indians. (*Page 2*)

The Egyptians are becoming increasingly convinced that at least limited military action against the Israelis may eventually be necessary to break the diplomatic stalemate. (*Page 3*)

In Ceylon, Mrs. Bandaranaike appears to be seeking ways to reduce Communist influence as the security situation aggravates her country's economic problems. (*Page 4*)

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[Redacted] (*Page 5*)

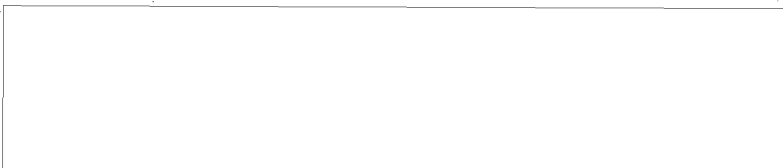
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PAKISTAN



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A [redacted] member of the US Consulate General traveled to the Mymensingh area on 12 April, observed conditions that may typify much of East Pakistan. The Western army had occupied the town of Tangail, but poorly armed, casually led, and ill-organized troops of the Bengali "Liberation Army" were about ten miles to the north. These Bengalis were prepared to defend the road to Mymensingh, but at the wrong place tactically. They had made no plans to break up into guerrilla bands that would be much more effective than attempting to stand and fight against a better equipped and trained foe. The Bengalis said they believed it was their fate to die for the cause of an eventual Bengali victory.

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[redacted] in areas controlled by or accessible to the army, the population seems to have disappeared, and many villages have been burned. Of the scores of factories in Tungi, none seems to be operating, and several have been completely gutted. Missionaries near Mymensingh told the Americans that food supplies would last only a month or two. They also said that India was providing rifles and ammunition to the Bengalis, and that they had seen a few Hindi-speaking Indian troops in civilian clothes.

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Meanwhile, oncoming rains will make it difficult for Western ground units to move through the countryside. Rainfall during May normally ranges from seven to twelve inches throughout the Eastern provinces, and in June it exceeds 20 inches in some places. Heavy pre-monsoon rains have already begun.

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USSR-PAKISTAN

Soviet President Podgorny's appeal of 3 April to Pakistani President Yahya has been accompanied by a number of private démarches both to the Indians and the Pakistanis urging caution and restraint. The Soviets have intervened at least three times with Yahya to urge him to use moderation in his dealing with the East Pakistanis and are reported also to have pressed him to seek a cease-fire.

The Soviets have also been talking regularly with the Indians, counseling against precipitate reaction to Pakistani developments.

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The Soviets no doubt are concerned that increased tension on the subcontinent can only work to the USSR's disadvantage. They probably fear that the Pakistanis and Indians might become embroiled in fighting as serious as that over Kashmir in 1965, a crisis which the Soviets helped to resolve. Moscow is likely also to fear that prolonged strife will reinforce extreme, radical groups in East Pakistan, and perhaps redound to Peking's benefit over the longer run.

Though the Soviets would prefer to see Pakistan remain united, Podgorny's strong criticism of Yahya's resort to force suggests that Moscow shares to some extent New Delhi's assessment that Pakistani unity has been damaged beyond repair. The Soviets have been careful, however, not to commit themselves publicly on the issue of East Pakistan's independence.

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EGYPT-ISRAEL

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Although most Egyptian military leaders appear to have a realistic appreciation of their armed forces' inability seriously to challenge Israel's hold on the Sinai, they are becoming increasingly frustrated with "no war - no peace." Some lower ranking officers have been pressing for a renewal of hostilities regardless of the outcome. The rhetoric in Cairo about the need to prepare for battle with Israel continues, and civil defense measures have recently been intensified. President Sadat has called April the "decisive" month in the Arab effort to resolve the conflict, and other officials have alleged that Egypt was prepared for "total war." Officials of Egypt's sole legal political organization, the Arab Socialist Union, also have shown a surprisingly hawkish attitude in public, perhaps indicating that criticism of Sadat's diplomatic efforts has sharpened behind the scenes.

The effect of all this on Sadat is difficult to gauge, but it seems clear that he cannot afford to ignore these factors indefinitely. Sadat may eventually conclude that his position can best be preserved and the diplomatic process advanced by resorting to limited military action against the Israelis in the Sinai. The recent introduction of even more sophisticated Soviet military hardware into Egypt may further embolden the country's military and its political leaders. The provision of this equipment, however, gives the Soviets a continuing strong voice in counseling restraint.

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CEYLON

Prime Minister Bandaranaike has followed up her decision to expel the entire North Korean Embassy staff (they have been given until Friday) with other steps designed to restrict Communist influence in her country. Yesterday she canceled a trip by Finance Minister Perera, leader of the Trotskyite party in the united front government, who had planned to depart today to attend economic meetings in Singapore and Manila before proceeding to Peking. The prime minister also ordered the arrest of the leader of the Peking-oriented wing of the Ceylon Communist Party and is considering proscribing the wing.

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In trying to move against leftist elements, Mrs. Bandaranaike must take into account the strong opposition within her cabinet to any steps which might jeopardize economic ties with the Chinese. One factor, apparently, is the important rubber-rice deal with China which has been negotiated annually since 1952. Last year, for example, Ceylon supplied China about 40,000 tons of rubber in exchange for 200,000 tons of rice.

The US Embassy reports that, with security still touch and go in several areas, food shortages and rising prices are beginning to pose serious problems in Colombo. Port operations virtually have stopped, and the country's already poor foreign exchange position is expected to grow worse as a result.

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24

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